

Lana Gordon, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Jan. 9, 2014

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Governor Proclaims January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month

TOPEKA, Kan. – Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, along with Attorney General Derek Schmidt, Secretary Phyllis Gilmore, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) and Secretary Lana Gordon, Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL), have proclaimed January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month in Kansas.

"Kansas has always had a strong history of fighting slavery," Governor Sam Brownback said. "We're now bringing that abolitionist spirit to the fight against the modern-day slavery of human trafficking."

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery in which victims are subjected to force, fraud or coercion for the purpose of commercial sex, debt bondage or forced labor. Kansas' location and interstate system make it a major transportation area for victims of human trafficking.

"Last year, the Kansas legislature enacted a strong new law to combat human trafficking in Kansas," Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said. "All Kansans can help reduce human trafficking by being on the lookout for suspicious activity and reporting it to local law enforcement officials."

The attorney general's office, DCF and KDOL have launched a campaign aimed at educating Kansans about the presence of human trafficking in Kansas, what to look for and how to report suspected human trafficking. Information is provided on the agencies' websites and through Public Service Announcements (PSAs) highlighting the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHRC) hotline.

"It's up to each person in the community to be vigilant and report suspected child sex trafficking," DCF Secretary Gilmore said. "These are not criminals; they are children who deserve our protection."

Kansas City is becoming a hub for traffickers and their victims, of which 80 percent are women and girls. Both Wichita and Kansas City have been recognized as major originating cities for human trafficking.

"House Bill 2034 strengthened our ability to prosecute labor traffickers and help end human trafficking in Kansas," KDOL Secretary Gordon said. "If you or someone you know is working under unfair conditions, report it."

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Governor Brownback signing proclamation to designate January as Human Trafficking Awareness in Kansas, Thursday in Topeka. L-R: Anna Pilato, Deputy Secretary, DCF, Dorothy Stucky Halley, Director of Victim Services Division, KSAG, Pat Colloton, Assistant Attorney General, Brian Dempsey, Director of Prevention and Protection Services, DCF, Jennifer Rapp, Deputy Director, Anti-Human Trafficking Unit, KSAG, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt, Kansas Governor Sam Brownback, Lana Gordon, Secretary KDOL, Brad Burke, Deputy Secretary, Chief Attorney KDOL, Rachel Berroth, Director, Bureau of Family Health, KDHE, Lucy Bloom, Director of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, DCF and Kathy Armstrong, Assistant Legal Director, DCF.